

28 February 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Colonel Robert E. Pursley  
Executive Assistant to the  
Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT : DMZ Memorandum

Attached for your use and information is the memorandum on Communist activity in, near and around the DMZ that you requested in our telephone conversation of 27 February.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

DCI/SAVA/GACarver:taw:28Feb69

Distribution:

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DATE: 28 Feb 1969

TO: THE DIRECTOR

FROM:

SUBJECT:

REMARKS:

Attached is the memorandum on the DMZ we prepared for Col. Pursley together with my cover note to him. I talked to Pursley on the phone this morning (28 February) and he specifically requests that for the time being this memorandum be sent only to him (for Laird) and that copies not be sent to Wheeler, Carroll, or other customers. The marching orders on distribution may change this afternoon, but unless you have strong objections, I plan to adhere to Pursley's wishes.

[Redacted Signature]

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

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28 February 1969

## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Communist Threat in the DMZ Area

Summary

1. The North Vietnamese appear to have stepped-up their use of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in recent weeks, but they have not as yet reconstituted the kind of threat they maintained there through mid-1968 when elements of at least four infantry division were actively engaged in combat operations in the area. With relatively little warning, however, they could significantly increase the threat to allied forces just below the DMZ by deploying the entire 304th Division into the zone.

1 November 1968 to Early February 1969

2. By 1 November 1968, the North Vietnamese had withdrawn the bulk of their forces in the DMZ back into southern North Vietnam. Several regiments which had been operating in southern Quang Tri and adjacent Thua Thien Province also joined the general regroupment north of the DMZ. Between 1 November and early February 1969, only very small groups of military personnel were detected moving in and through the DMZ, apparently engaged in reconnaissance and logistics missions and possible limited infiltration efforts. There is no hard evidence of any attempt by the enemy to deploy significant numbers of troops through the zone during this period.

3. Likewise, enemy tactical activity in the DMZ stayed at a low level during this period. No ground attacks were conducted from within the DMZ against allied positions just below the zone and, although 19 light mortar and rocket attacks were reported, only 10 were confirmed by US observers and none of these were considered significant. The shellings may have been partially motivated by the continued presence of allied reconnaissance patrols in the southern half of the zone since early November. US reconnaissance aircraft operating over the DMZ have drawn enemy fire 122 times since the bombing halt; however, no aircraft have been downed or seriously damaged.

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The Buildup

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5. Since the enemy's current offensive began on the night of 22-23 February, action has increased in the DMZ area but at nowhere near the pace noted in other sectors of the country. Except for strong ground attacks on 25 February against two US Marine fire support bases south of the zone near the "Rockpile," enemy action has been confined largely to sporadic shelling of allied forces and installations along the southern boundary of the zone. The intensity of these two ground attacks, however, involved Marine casualties of 36 killed and 105 wounded and enemy losses of 71 killed. Their intensity strongly suggests that an enemy main force unit was involved. There is still no hard evidence that the attacks were launched southward across the zone; nor is there hard evidence that they were supported by artillery fire from within the zone. This lack of evidence does not preclude the possibility that these attacks were launched across or supported from within the zone, but our presently available evidence simply does not conclusively demonstrate that they were so launched or supported.

The Threat of Additional Attacks

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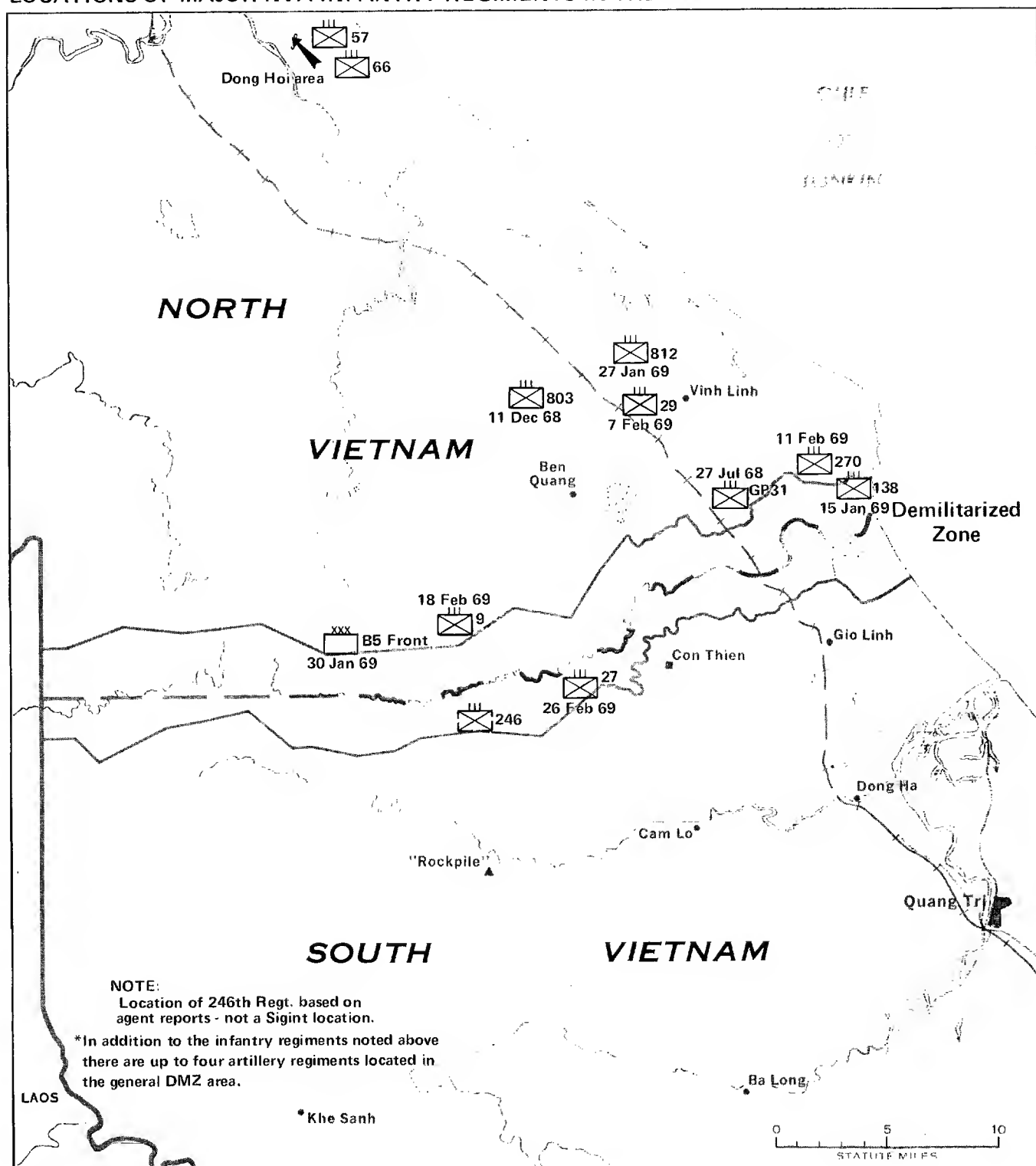
7. Some ten infantry regiments and up to four artillery regiments are available both north and south of the DMZ to support a renewal of major North Vietnamese combat operations across the zone. Except for the 27th Regiment and possibly the 138th and 246th infantry regiments south of the Ben Hai River, however, there is no hard evidence that any of these forces have, as yet, been committed. Most of these regiments are located north of the DMZ in positions which they have occupied for the past few months. Moreover, two of the infantry regiments -- the 57th and 66th of the 304th Division -- are still located as far north as Dong Hoi, although, as indicated earlier, their communications suggest impending movement.

8. If the North Vietnamese actually intend to reopen the DMZ front, in concert with their current countrywide offensive, we would expect to see evidence in signal intelligence very shortly of large-scale troop movements into and across the zone -- including that of the 304th Division, possibly preceded or accompanied by a resumption of heavy artillery attacks against allied bases to the south.

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# LOCATIONS OF MAJOR NVA INFANTRY REGIMENTS IN THE DMZ AREA\*



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28 FEBRUARY

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